

Ramblers Gems



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To the Rescue.

There are 49 volunteer mountain rescue teams and eight regional bodies in England and Wales, across nine geographical areas, and the parent body **Mountain Rescue England & Wales** are there to help them deliver the best possible care to their casualties. They can't do that without the support of walkers and the general public alike, who, by their donations provide and maintain the highest standards in casualty care, technical rope rescue and swift water rescue.

The funds help provide key items of kit to teams and assist in keeping their vehicles on the road. Legacies left for Mountain Rescue allows them to plan for the future ensuring that this valuable community service remains voluntary and free to the casualty. Mountain rescue team members are on call, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to recover climbers from precipitous crags, reunite lost walkers with their pals and ensure injured and sick casualties are safely delivered into vital hospital care.

Mountain rescue cover so much more than mountains.

They also regularly help search for missing children and vulnerable adults, on and off the hills, whilst administering sympathetic support to their families. They search riverbanks and swift water, and wade chest-deep through flooded urban streets aiding swimmers, kayakers and devastated homeowners.

And, between them, they rescue a frankly stunning number of dogs, cows, sheep and any number of other animals, from all manner of inaccessible places.

All this whilst continuing to practice and hone their first aid skills, technical ropework, water rescue and search management, and maintaining their bases, equipment and vehicles – not to mention taking time to maintain their own fitness.

Oh, and did I mention that they're all volunteers?



Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association

Glenda B

To Stack or Not to Stack?

That is a very controversial question. Stone stacking has carried spiritual meaning across cultures for centuries as talismans and symbols of faith. The act of balancing stones carries with it a practice of patience and a physical effort of creating balance. Each rock can signify an intention of grace for thankfulness or is offered up for another in need.

Stone piles have been built by world cultures from nomadic to agricultural to tribal. Ancient Mongolians erected cairns, as did mountain dwellers in South America. Often, stacks were intended to help people find their way safely around areas with little vegetation or to act as a warning.

Large cairns also served as lighthouses for ancient Norse, Celtic, and Scottish sailors. Humans have buried their dead under cairns. Sculptors like stacked stones. They regard them as rock artistry as they act as both place markers and art. Many people think the meaning behind stacking rocks is that you can make a wish!

How do you feel when you come across one in a remote place, along the seashore on a beach? They stand by the sea at Lindisfarne. When hiking through nature, it could be useful to see a landmark every now and then to remind you that you're still on the right track. When navigating becomes difficult and the route is easily missed, would you use them to get yourself back onto the correct path?

**Skaill beach
Skara Brae**



Love them or hate them you will notice stacks of stones littering the countryside. Rock stacking has become a popular activity in recent years and has now become widespread. All over the world, people are stacking rocks and stones of all shapes and sizes. Naturalist and conservationist opinions seem to point to this being a really bad idea to the point that many national parks and regions are banning it outright. In some places such as Orkney beaches this new age of stone-stacking is almost on an industrial scale.

**Lindisfarne
5th July 2017**



It is becoming a heated debate in which you can be called a kill joy if you object to them! A landscape full of piles of stones is just not what nature should look like. Moreover, the rocks needed for all those stacks are part of habitats of small species. Think about little crabs, insects, tiny animals that need to hide or seek refuge and safety in between gaps of rocks. When stacking rocks, it disturbs the natural order of nature. The moving of stones exposes soil and exacerbates erosion, destroying the cool undersides of stones that are sanctuaries for millions of invertebrates. Every time you build a pile, you're basically scaring away wild animals and disrupting their natural habitat.

Historic England has warned that stone-stacking is putting at risk historic monuments. A multitude of stacked stones on Skaill beach, immediately below the neolithic village of Skara Brae has appeared and some fear that ancient ruins may be disturbed.

When we reach a remote summit or deserted beach, we know people have stepped there before, but for a moment we can enjoy a moment of uninhabited peacefulness. No longer. A forest of stacked stones destroys all sense of the wild. Stacks are an intrusion, enforcing our presence on others long after our departure. It's an offence against the first and most important rule of wild adventuring: *leave no trace*.

I would much rather do a coastal walk and admire sea stacks formed by nature - wind and water - wave erosion!

**Yesnaby Castle sea stack,
Orkney**



Jean G

A Fox on Pendle Hill

We may have often climbed Pendle Hill to admire the panoramic view that rewards us for our effort to conquer this sleeping giant. We seldom, if ever climb Pendle and encounter a vision, but this is what happened to George Fox.

In 1652, he climbed Pendle Hill, where he had a vision of a “*great people to be gathered*” waiting for him. The beginning of the Society of Friends (Quakers) is usually dated from the day, soon afterwards, when Fox preached to large crowds on Firbank Fell, near Sedbergh, in Cumbria. Fox refused go into the chapel to preach but instead spoke for three hours to the gathered crowd from the top of a nearby crag – this is now known as *Fox’s Pulpit*. Some days later, he was at Swarthmoor Hall, near Ulverston, home of Judge Fell, Margaret Fell and their family. Following the death of Judge Fell, Fox married Margaret Fell in 1669.



Fox’s Pulpit on Firbank Fell

George Fox was born and grew up in Fenny Drayton in Leicestershire in the turbulent times leading up to the English Civil War (1642-1651). At 12, he was apprenticed to a local tradesman, but he left home in 1643 to seek ‘the truth’, through listening to preachers and others, and developing his own ideas. He knew the Bible intimately, and it was central to his life, but he looked for other sources of inspiration too. He came to believe that everyone, men and women alike, could encounter God themselves, so that priests were not needed. This experience need not be in a church: these ‘steeple houses’, and the tithes that supported them, were therefore unnecessary. Those who believed this became known as ‘Friends of Truth’.

Ed
(North East Coach Ramblers will visit Fairbank Fell nr Sedbergh on Sunday 4th September)



Pendle Hill

He began talking to everyone he met about his ideas. He was soon in trouble with the authorities and was imprisoned for the first time in Nottingham in 1649. According to Fox, the term ‘Quaker’ originated from a sarcastic remark by the judge in Fox’s second trial, in Derby, in 1650.

His ministry expanded and he undertook many tours of North America and today the Quakers are a global movement.

A challenge to your skills is to discover George Fox’s Well, unmarked on the OS map, and now covered over by a modest, urban-looking steel trapdoor that blends into the steep hillside of Pendle. Raising the cover reveals a silver tankard chained to the lid, ready to be lowered into the well. The water in the well comes from the spring below and is renowned for being ice cold, glass-clear and sweet. George Fox, young and full of spiritual zeal, refreshed himself here in 1652. To find the well from the stile near the new walkers’ shelter, head north, downhill towards Downham and keep slightly right. The unmade path clings to the steep hillside, so take care especially in wet conditions.

George Fox is one of the Pendle Radicals, a research and creative project, exploring the stories of some of Pendle Hill’s extraordinary change makers, radical thinkers and nonconformists.

George Fox Well



Michael C

Erratic Oddities

Erratics are huge boulders transported far from their origin by glaciers during the last ice age and left behind when the glaciers melted. The Norber Erratics, of which there are over 100 in total, are perhaps the finest example of erratics in Britain and can be found on the southern slopes of Ingleborough, close to the village of Austwick.

Massive dark boulders of sandstone and slate, some of them precariously balanced on limestone plinths, are a spectacular sight and well worth a visit. Spring Vale Ramblers have an 8 mile walk planned to visit the site on 27th August.

The striking erratic boulders resting on the pavements around Ingleborough are some of the most endearing features of the Dales landscape. These ‘out of place’ geological oddities draw the camera of even the most casual of visitor. When the deposited rock is not limestone, the contrast is particularly stark and the contrasting hues in the opposing rocks make a superb subject for the photographer. Here, boulders of Silurian dark sandstone, which technically should lie below the limestone, rest in their hundreds on top of it – leading some to suspect that the glacier must have travelled uphill onto Norber Brow before depositing them. This can’t actually be proved, as the intricate folding and uplifting of the basement rocks in Crummackdale is such that at points the Silurian strata actually lie slightly above the younger rocks. The source of the boulders is clear on the north-west flank of Crummackdale, and the ice has transported these only hundreds of metres, rather than for any great distance.



Norber Erratic above Austwick

There are other examples of isolated boulders that just shouldn’t be there. A fine example is the well-known ‘Obelisk’ – a huge egg-shaped limestone boulder on the pavements of Scales Moor, along the west side of Chapel-le-Dale. There are no surrounding areas of loose boulders from which it could have rolled, and it has obviously been dumped by the retreating ice, standing resolute through all the major events of world history. Around the Obelisk are hundreds of smaller erratics, both of limestone and contrasting gritstone – and adding interest to an otherwise moon-like wasteland of bare rock.



The Obelisk on Scales Moor

Similarly, the famous Cheese Press Stone (consisting of two huge limestone boulders) stands at the west shoulder of Kingsdale, on remnants of a once extensive limestone pavement; the great rocks having shielded the supports from sub-aerial erosion.



The Cheese Press Stones Kingsdale

Eleanor

My love for Canals

I must have been around five years old when I fell in love with canals. The Trent & Mersey Canal runs right through the heart of Stone hence the town is known as 'Canal Town'. My grandparents lived in Stone. We regularly walked from Stone to Meaford to visit family. Our route into town also took us along the canal towpath. There was a Blacksmith's Shop at the Boatyard which is a Grade II Listed Building. Nowadays a new section of towpath links in with a section between Barlaston and Meaford to create a national cycle path between Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent.

In 1766, James Brindley, the canal builder, designed a scheme to build the Grand Trunk Canal to connect the two rivers, Mersey and Trent. It was backed by Josiah Wedgwood who saw that it offered an efficient way to bring raw materials to the 'potteries and to transport finished wares to his customers.



Lock Gates and The Star at Stone

Stone became the headquarters of the canal company with its office sited below Star Lock. The Grand Trunk Canal is now known as the Trent and Mersey Canal.

For 178 years the Leeds-Liverpool canal was a private company. But in 1948, along with most other canals it was nationalised and maintained by the British Waterways Board. It is 127 miles long but with the branches it is 141 miles.

British Water Ways worked hard but there was a backlog of maintenance and during the 1960s and 70s there was little interest in the canal and its condition deteriorated and canalside industries went into decline.

In the 1990s several voluntary and community groups adopted sections of the canal and worked to improve the environment of the canal— these included Rishton, Clayton-le-Moors and Church but there were many more.

The Canal & River Trust (C&RT) charity was set up in 2012 to care for England and Wales' 200-year-old waterways, holding them in trust for the nation forever.

This year we celebrated our 10th Anniversary.

From 2019 - 2020, Michael Counter, SVRC and Ramblers NE Lancs Area Chairman organised a series of 'Beyond the Towpath Walks' in partnership with C&RT. I bookmarked and led several of these walks and my interest in canals was revived. I was working for an environmental charity, and in May 2019 we formed a partnership with the Trust.

Work goes on all year round. In winter – locks and bridges are repaired, and leaks are sorted out. In summer boats have to be controlled to stop water being wasted and the towpaths receive vegetation management. Canals are a key part of the country's land drainage system. Many canalside warehouses, lock-keepers cottages, wharfs and bridges are listed buildings. Restoration of canalside buildings continues. Following a £2.9 million restoration project Burnley's historic Finsley Wharf was reopened in August 2021.



Enfeld Wharf, Clayton-le-Moors

Now retired, I am the C&RT, Hyndburn Taskforce, Lead Volunteer for the nine-mile Hyndburn section of the canal, but we concentrate on maintaining the urban entrances. Many of my 'Discover Hyndburn' walks take in sections of the canal. I really love the role, volunteering and visiting other canals.



Church Kirk –sculptures at the halfway point on the Leeds Liverpool Canal

Barbara Sharples